

EQUITABLE CLASSIFICATION PLAN

GROUP 2

PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST POSITION EVALUATION SYSTEM

*Michigan Department of Civil Service
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GUIDE TO CLASSIFYING SPECIALISTS UNDER THE ECP GROUP 2 PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST POSITION EVALUATION SYSTEM

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to assist in evaluating qualifying positions using the ECP Group 2 Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System (PSPES) factors.

The PSPES factoring system is designed to evaluate professional specialist positions. Such positions must be designated as specialists by the appointing authorities, and accepted and classified as such by Civil Service. The positions require advanced knowledge in the field of work and: (1) are responsible for highly complex assignments, (2) have significant scope of responsibility, and (3) have considerable impact within the department.

The PSPES is to be used by appointing authorities when requesting the establishment or reclassification of a specialist position. The system assesses the complexity of duties assigned, the scope of responsibility, and the impact of the job, considering the objectives and mission of the organization. **Use of a committee of experts within the agency to do the evaluations is recommended.**

Appointing authorities must: (1) identify programs, specialty areas, independent contractor projects, or equivalent job functions that satisfy the concept definitions contained in this document; (2) certify that identified programs, specialty areas, independent contractor projects, or equivalent job functions satisfy the concept definitions contained in this document; (3) certify that the position being evaluated is assigned responsibility for a program, specialty area, independent contractor project, or equivalent job function as defined in this document; and (4) recommend levels for positions through application of the PSPES factors. Civil Service will review the level recommendations and the identification and certifications of the appointing authorities and will document the Civil Service action on a Position Action Request (CS-129).

A specialist is a one-of-a-kind position within a department, agency, or program area equivalent in scope, or has statewide responsibility for a program or service area. The program or service area must be unique and essential to the department's

mission. Staff or program specialists are responsible and accountable for the full range of services or subject matter areas associated with the work. Specialists are recognized as the persons most knowledgeable about a particular professional area and are considered by the agency to be subject matter experts for a difficult, complex, or highly technical area. Specialists must be designated as such by the appointing authority; i.e., it is not a responsibility one assumes. No responsibility may be assumed by an incumbent without appointing authority designation, for classification purposes.

Program specialist positions have well-defined parameters that outline and house the particular program. The program description is usually written in the form of legislation, departmental rules, policies, or mission statements, and is identified in the department's budget, operating statement, or similar documents. Program specialists typically initiate and have direct involvement in the establishment and maintenance of the policies and procedures that are the foundation of the program. They monitor and oversee the methods used by others and provide expertise in correcting misapplications or misinterpretations of the program's implementation by other staff.

A staff specialist, like a program specialist, is assigned unique functions and they are viewed as the exclusive subject matter expert in a particular field of work or professional discipline. A staff specialist is distinguished from program specialists by their lack of defined program criteria. However, the staff specialist serves as the department's or agency's singular expert for a difficult and highly technical area.

Both program and staff specialists provide consultation and technical direction to others. Some specialists are assigned the authority to ensure that the program objectives are met. In both cases, these assignments comprise the preponderance (greatest percentage of time) of the position's ongoing activities. Specialist positions are non-supervisory.

Specialists differ from senior level workers in that the scope, depth, breadth, and responsibility for assignments are of greater significance, sensitivity and importance to the department or agency. Having sole responsibility for a program or specific subject area of a department or agency does not, in and of itself, satisfy specialist criteria. All of the pertinent criteria defined in the official PSPES must also be met.

Concept Definitions

In order for a position to be classified as a specialist position, a position must (1) satisfy one of the concepts defined below, (2) be designated by the appointing authority as a specialist to be evaluated on the PSPES factoring system, and (3) be reviewed and approved by the Department of Civil Service.

Independent Contract Project Specialist—The predominant and essential function is to serve as the agency's designated technical expert in the professional discipline and contract manager of ongoing independent contractor projects that have substantial financial or programmatic impact on the agency's operation. Such positions have complete operational authority over the contract. Responsibilities include providing programmatic expert technical advice and consultation to the contractor, monitoring the development and delivery of the contractor's work product and taking corrective action where necessary, authorizing work stoppage or continuance, developing contractual arrangements and interpreting contract language to management, and ensuring the project or service is implemented in accordance with the mission of the department.

Program Specialist—The predominant and essential function is the assigned responsibility for an accepted program that is state-, department-, or agency-wide, or the equivalent in scope. Such positions are responsible for highly complex assignments that have considerable impact and are one-of-a-kind within the organization. Responsibilities include the development of program content, policies, and procedures; program advocacy; oversight of program goal achievement; and the provision of authoritative technical direction in all aspects of the program specialty.

Staff Specialist—The predominate and essential function is to serve as the expert in a particular specialty area or professional discipline that is state-, department-, or agency-wide or the equivalent in scope. Such positions are responsible for highly complex assignments that have considerable impact and are one-of-a-kind within the organization. Responsibilities include the provision of expert advice in the area of specialty to department management, outside entities, or the public; directing and conducting highly complex studies and analysis without technical direction; and serving as the final recommending authority within the assigned specialty area.

NOTE: The appointing authority must document the basis for recognizing a position under the agency designated equivalency standard. No equivalency determination will be made until these conditions are met.

Program and Specialty Area Definitions

The terms **Program** and **Specialty Area** are defined as a function administered by a department to provide a product or service to the department's clients or constituency. Programs and specialty areas must be of significant breadth, depth, complexity, and importance to the department, and responsibilities typically include the development and/or monitoring of procedures, guidelines, and policies that are the foundation of the program. Programs and specialty areas are identified in the department's budget or other official documents and have defined goals and objectives. Only those programs and specialty areas within a department's organization plan that are designated by the Appointing Authority and approved by Civil Service under these definitions will be recognized and accepted by Civil Service for specialist classification action purposes.

Agency Designation of Specialist Position

Appointing authorities have the exclusive authority to (1) assign job duties and (2) designate a position as an Independent Contract Specialist, Program Specialist, Staff Specialist, or equivalent in scope position. Agency designations and rating recommendations based upon the PSPES must be provided to Civil Service for final classification determination.

Organizational Structure

Level allocation of professional specialist positions will consider the organizational placement and reporting relationship of the position. Specialist positions are precluded from being classified at a level equal to or higher than that of the properly classified supervisor in the immediate chain of command. (See Glossary: Structural Consideration).

Using the PSPES in the Designation and Rating of Specialist Positions

Because department officials are in the best position to judge the relative worth, value, and significance of their program areas, a significant amount of weight is given to a department's recommended factoring of positions. Therefore, it is recommended that the agency establish an internal specialist review committee of experts

knowledgeable about the mission, goals and programs of the agency. The committee should be comprised of executive-level officials or their designees who have a global perspective regarding the department's programs and services. This will ensure that the positions being considered are fairly and consistently rated using a comparative analysis to determine the relative value of an individual position when compared to other specialist positions.

When rating positions, the committee/appointing authority should consider a number of variables, such as the following:

- (1) level of financial responsibility;
- (2) financial, material, or environmental impact;
- (3) impact on the population;
- (4) consequences of error;
- (5) complexity of scientific or other research necessary to perform the job;
- (6) size of the program;
- (7) impact on other operations within the department and/or on other organizational entities;
- (8) impact on the agency's mission and policies;
- (9) the relative stability of the program;
- (10) the technical difficulty of the work being performed; and
- (11) the program scope.

All designated and accepted specialist positions are rated on PSPES to determine the classification level. All specialist positions rated and accepted at the 13-15 level will be classified in the most appropriate specialist class series, e.g., Departmental Specialist 13, 14, 15. All specialists rated at the 12 level will be recognized as First-Level Specialists and will be classified in the advanced level of the most appropriate ECP Group 2 professional worker class, e.g., Departmental Analyst 12. This classification concept is defined as:

First-Level Specialist—A senior allocating standard for a position that is designated and accepted as a qualifying specialist and that by application of the Professional Specialist Position Evaluation System (PSPES) factors is determined to be the 12 level (less than 120 total points on the PSPES). Such positions shall be allocated at the advanced level of the most appropriate ECP Group 2 professional worker class series. Only those positions within an agency's organization plan that are designated by the appointing authority and approved by Civil Service as specialists will be recognized under this standard.

The First-Level Specialist concept is one of the Universal Senior Standards, as defined in the ECP Glossary.

After identifying and analyzing all relevant variables, the department committee/appointing authority then rates the position using the three equally weighted factors defined in the official system:

- I. Job Complexity
- II. Program or Specialty Scope
- III. Impact

FACTOR I: JOB COMPLEXITY

This factor measures the guidelines, objectives, and direction the position has available to it, and the range of complexity and job variables associated with the work.

Guidelines, Objectives & Direction:

If the position has available to it established guidelines that are fairly well defined (e.g., policies, procedures, reference materials, etc.) it will typically receive Element 1. This is the standard rating for most specialist positions. Positions of this type are usually housed within a division or section and receive direction from a manager or division administrator. Positions of this type are usually responsible for relatively well-defined, developed, and stable program/specialty areas.

If the position must develop and maintain the guidelines, departmental policies, procedures, and other related documents of a program or specialty area, in accordance

with general or broader operational (nonspecific) policy guidance provided by an executive official (bureau director or higher), it should be rated Element 2.

It is important to note that while the position's reporting relationship influences its factor assignment, it does not result in an automatic assignment of either Element 1 or 2. Some positions housed in divisions may develop and implement programs that are highly complex in nature and are created in accordance with broad policy directives issued by executive officials. A position may have frequent contact with executive staff, or a "dotted line" reporting relationship to the executive official. Under these circumstances, a position may receive Element 2. Conversely, some positions reporting to executive officials have available to them specific and well-defined program criteria and guidelines and therefore should be assigned Element 1.

Range of Complexity and Job Variables:

The complexity of the work and the number of variables or subject areas are evaluated using comparative analysis of the relative technical difficulty of the subject matter associated with the position's assignment and the relative diversity of tasks associated with the work. This can be rated by comparing the duties to those of other specialist positions within the respective professional discipline, or to those of other professional disciplines used by the department. For example, a departmental specialist that has responsibility for developing a program for a division would not normally have the same level of complexity or number of variables as a position that has responsibility for developing a program that crosses multiple or all departmental lines and areas. In this situation, the rating of the job complexity and number of variables for the division specialist would receive a rating of either Element A or B, depending on the department's relative analysis of the difficulty of the division's program areas. (The majority of specialties are rated Element B.) A position responsible for development of a highly complex departmental program would typically be rated Element C.

FACTOR II: PROGRAM OR SPECIALTY SCOPE

This factor rates the extent of the specialist's responsibility for the completed work product, the diversity of program areas, the size and complexity of the program or service being provided, and the position's interaction with other program or specialty areas.

Specialist Management Responsibility:

Within the specialist management responsibility considerations, if a position serves as a technical consultant to others by advising them on the proper methods to be used to accomplish the program objectives, then it is typically rated Element 3. This is the standard rating for most specialists. If a position not only provides consultation to others on the program or specialty area, but has the authority to countermand the decisions of others to ensure that program standards and goals are maintained, then it may be appropriate to assign an element rating of 4.

Program/Specialty Areas:

Within program or specialty scope considerations, the relative size and scope of the program or specialty area is best determined by making objective comparisons with other specialty areas. If the program scope is relatively narrow (“few” subjects) and it has limited interaction with the other program areas, it should be rated Element D. If it involves several subject areas and interacts with other program areas, it should be rated Element E. If it has diverse subjects that require complex interaction with multiple program areas, it should be rated Element F. The distinction between, “few,” “several,” and “diverse” subject areas of responsibility is department-specific. The agency committee/designee should establish and consistently apply departmental specific criteria for this purpose. For example, if a Personnel Management Specialist has responsibility for collective bargaining agreement issues involving several contracts, it should be rated Element E. However, if it has responsibility for all collective bargaining agreements, it would be rated Element F because of the diversity in the contracts and the complex interaction involved in negotiating and interpreting them. The standard rating for the typical specialist is Element E.

FACTOR III: IMPACT

Type of Impact:

This factor measures the type of impact a position has and its relationship (predominant effect of impact) to the mission of the department. If the decisions made by the specialist to accomplish the program’s objectives are of normal magnitude, it should be rated Element 5. If the decisions made by the specialist have unusually critical or significant impact on the department (e.g., result in policy changes or have legal ramifications), it should be rated Element 6. The majority of positions are rated Element 5.

Predominant Effect of Impact:

The organizational placement of the position should be considered in determining its relative impact on the department's mission and relative value to the department, but similar to the other variables, it should not be used as an absolute overriding consideration. If the work assignments and decisions made only affect divisional program areas, it should be rated Element G. If the decisions made directly impact the program responsibilities of the bureau in which the position is housed, it should be rated Element H. If the position makes decisions and has the authority to take actions that directly and significantly affect the overall mission of the department and its policies, it should be rated Element I. For example, some specialists housed in divisions may make decisions that have significant impact on the department's primary mission and should also be rated Element I, while other specialists that report to bureau directors may only impact the bureau's program areas and should be rated Element H.

ECP GROUP 2 PROFESSIONAL SPECIALIST SYSTEM FACTORS

Michigan Department of Civil Service

FACTOR I: JOB COMPLEXITY

Guidelines, Objectives, and Direction	Range of Complexity and Job Variables		
	A. Complex in nature, with a limited number of variables.	B. Very complex in nature, with a large number of variables.	C. Highly complex in nature, with a very large number of variables.
1. Guidelines are specific and available. Objectives are subject to administrative goals and policy direction.	25	50	75
2. Guidelines are general and not readily available. Objectives are determined by long-range, executive-level goals and policy direction.	50	75	100

FACTOR II: PROGRAM OR SPECIALTY SCOPE

Specialist Management Responsibility	Program/Specialty Area		
	D. Few distinct subject areas, directed toward a relatively narrow program or specialty area.	E. Several distinct subject areas requiring interaction of activities over a broad program or specialty area.	F. Diverse subject areas requiring complex interaction of program or specialty area activities over very broad or diverse program areas.
3. Planning, organizing, consulting, and advising to achieve objectives and goals.	25	50	75
4. Ensuring that proper methods, procedures, or processes are being utilized by others, and direct responsibility for the completed product or project.	50	75	100

FACTOR III: IMPACT

Type of Impact	Predominant Effect of Impact		
	G. Division mission, within the overall bureau and departmental missions.	H. Bureau mission, within the overall departmental mission.	I. Primary mission of the department.
5. Direct impact.	25	50	75
6. Substantial direct impact.	50	75	100

Key: 0 – 119 = 12

120 – 194 = 13

195 – 269 = 14

270 – 300 = 15